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ABSTRACT

This document contains a brief bibliography of peer-reviewed literature, with abstracts, on intergenerational relationships. It is one of 12 bibliographies on aging prepared by the National Agricultural Library for its "Pathfinders" series of publications. Topics covered by the other 11 bibliographies include aging parents, adult children, dementia and Alzheimer's disease in the elderly (written for educators), dementia and Alzheimer's disease in the elderly (written for consumers), family caregiving, family support networks, grandparenting, humor in later life, living arrangements in later life, pets and the elderly, and sibling relationships in adulthood. This bibliography on intergenerational relationships contains citations for 30 books and articles for researchers and educators on the topics of attitudes, relationships, intergenerational programming, and public policy; and 4 books and articles on relationships for consumers. It concludes with a list of organizations that readers may contact for further assistance. (NB)

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FEBRUARY 1990

INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

PREPARED BY BILLIE H. FRAZIER, Ph.D., CFLE **

This PATHFINDER has been prepared to help researchers, educators and consumers better understand attitudes, relationships, and roles that exist between generations in today's society and to learn about public policy issues and specific educational programs.

RESEARCHER/EDUCATOR

ATTITUDES

"Changing Attitudes Toward the Elderly: The Impact of Three Methods of Attitude Change," Sheila Murphy-Russell, Ann H. Die and James L. Walker, Jr. Educational Gerontology, 12(3):241-251, 1986.

This study is designed to investigate ways of changing attitudes about the elderly in a positive direction. Three techniques are considered individually, and the three combined are assessed to explore the value of different kinds of classroom instruction. The total workshop series is successful in changing attitudes toward the elderly. Direct experience with an elderly couple is the most effective technique used.

"College Students' Attitudes Toward Elderly Sexual Behavior: Implications for Family Life Education," Clara C. Pratt and Vicki L. Schmall. Family Relations, 38(2):137-141, 1989.

College students evaluate eight sexual behaviors or situations in which the age of a person and relationship to the student varies. Results indicate that as emotional closeness to an elderly relative increases, acceptance of several sexual behaviors of the elderly decreases. This finding supports the concern that family members need to recognize the role that sexuality plays in the lives of elders.

This PATHFINDER lists significant resources that are judged to be accurate, readable, and available. Opinions expressed in the publication do not reflect views of the United States Department of Agriculture.

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"The Effects of Preschoolers' Visits to a Nursing Home," Carol Seefeldt. The Gerontologist, 27(2):228-232, 1987.

Attitudes of preschool children who visit infirm elders in a nursing home setting once a week for one full year are compared with a group of children without this contact. After the visits, preschoolers hold more negative attitudes toward their own aging and the elderly. However, the day care and nursing home staffs believe the visits to be of value for the residents. Balance is suggested when planning intergenerational contact so that children also have contact with competent, active, and able elders.

RELATIONSHIPS

"Adolescents and Their Aging Parents," Arthur Mandelbaum. Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic, 52(3):246-258, 1988.

The author examines struggles and conflicts of an adolescent son and his father. The parents in the case initially feel old and isolated as their children seek their own identity. Unresolved conflicts and trauma from the parents' own adolescent experiences are projected onto a child who wanted more freedom and responsibility. The clash between father and son is ameliorated by reinforcing family strengths. The relationship between family members is modified as the father's repressed mourning and grief are resolved.

"Aging and Intergenerational Relations," Gary R. Lee. Journal of Family Issues, 8(4):448-450, December 1987.

This article focuses on family member support for the elderly. The author suggests that since it has been clearly determined that family members are available and willing to provide support for the elderly, we now need to ask the more difficult questions about the consequences, both manifest and latent, of family support. This may be the most critical issue in the study of intergenerational relations for the next several years.

"Aging Parents and Adult Children: Research Themes in Intergenerational Relations," Jay A. Mancini and Rosemary Blieszner. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 51(May 1989):275-290.

Dominant themes representing the relationships of older parents and their adult children are discussed. Topics pertain to roles and responsibilities, parent-child interaction (contact patterns, exchange, assistance, and support), individual well-being, relationship quality, and caregiving by adult children. These are discussed within the context of societal age structure changes. Speculation on the future of research focuses on the application of theory, the need for studies on conflict, and alternative approaches to family companionship.

"Enduring Ties: Older Adults' Parental Role and Responsibilities," Rosemary Blieszner and Jay A. Mancini. Family Relations, 36(2):176-180, April 1987.

A lifespan perspective addressing generational relationships from the perspective of older adults is provided. Qualitative and quantitative data from independent older adults are used to explore aspects of their parenting role. Expectations of children centered on affection, assistance, respect, responsibility, and open communication. Desired relationships with adult children were characterized by warmth, sharing, affection, and avoidance of direct interference in each others' lives. Family practitioners are encouraged to address issues of planning and decision making around topics such as long-term care, medical intervention, and wills.

Family Interaction and Psychological Well-Being: An Analysis of Older Parent-Adult Child Relationships, Jay A. Mancici, Shirley S. Travis and Robert C. Bianchinotti. Blacksburg, VA: Center for Gerontology, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, June 1985.

This study investigated the relationship between parent-child interaction and psychological well-being of both generations. Results indicate that greater task interaction is associated with more agitation and lower morale for adult children, while greater companionate interaction is associated with less lonely dissatisfaction for older parents. Contact satisfaction is significantly related to interaction and psychological well-being of parents. Health is consistently the most significant predictor of psychological well being of parents .

"Family Issues in Multigenerational Households," Leslie L. Feinauer, Dale A. Lund, and Jean R. Miller. The American Journal of Family Therapy, 15(1):52-61, 1987.

As a result of a study to assess issues faced by multigenerational families, several implications emerged. Areas identified as major factors include dependency, sibling relationships, depression, and demanding and egocentric behavior. Living with elderly parents requires adult children to confront conflict and realities of aging.

"Geographic Distance and Intergenerational Contact: An Empirical Examination of the Relationship," Gail B. Frankel and David J. Dewit. Journal of Aging Studies, 3(2):139-162, 1989.

This study is an assessment of the nature of family relationships between family members who are separated by geographic distance.

"Intergenerational Family Transfers," David J. Cheal. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 45(4):805-813, November 1983.

Conflicting theories exist about the distribution of family resources throughout the life cycle. Several studies indicate that young adults are major beneficiaries of familial transactions. They typically receive more tangible assistance from their parents than they give. The author provides a formal structural model as a focus for further inquiry.

Intergenerational Relationships, Vjenka Garms-Homolova, Erika M. Hoerning and Doris Schaeffer (eds.). Lewiston, NY: C.J. Hogrefe, 1984.

This book represents a major step towards a theoretical conception of intergenerational relationships. It includes various conceptual approaches, themes, methodologies, a multitude of empirical findings, and examines the nature and societal consequences of relations among the generations.

"The Mid/Late Life Generation Gap: Adult Children with Aging Parents," Jane E. Myers. Journal of Counseling and Development, 66(7)331-335, March 1988.

This article takes a look at aging parents and adult children, family demographic changes, mid- and late-life family relationships, and family stress situations and responses. The author provides strategies for intervention and considerations for counselors. The author states that psychosocial and personal needs and concerns can create conflicts between adult children and their aging parents. Conflicts may be amenable to counseling interventions.

"New Views on the Family Life of the Elderly and the Near-Elderly," Joan Aldous. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 49(2):227-234, May 1987.

This article explores intergenerational relations of couples in their early and mid-sixties who are representative of the increasingly well off, and physically healthy seniors in today's society. As parents, they are involved in associational and functional activities with their adult children that reflect consensus and affective relations. Data suggest that today's "young-old," like their children, are keeping intergenerational ties voluntary rather than obligatory. Parents are selecting family members in greatest need (the single and the divorced with children) for attention. A discussion of rationales for this lifestyle is included.

"Parents of the Baby Boomers: A New Generation of Young-Old." J.A. Giordano. Family Relations, 37(4):411-424, October 1988.

Entering old-age as early as 1990, the next new cohort of young-old will be the parents of today's middle-aged baby boomers. Examination of cohort differences provides a beginning focus on family life in the future. Predictions are offered on the nature of marriage, remarriage, divorce, and the complexity of the family network. Implications are offered to educators, policymakers, practitioners and profit-minded service providers. This new generation of young-old will place unique demands upon society.

"Rural and Urban Elderly: Differences in the Quality of the Parent-Child Relationship," Joyce McDonough Mercier, Lori Paulson, and Earl W. Morris. Family Relations, 37(4):68-72, January 1988.

Differences in quality of relationships between rural and urban older people and their children are examined. Results indicate that for rural parents, living close to the child is the most important contributor to a high quality relationship, followed by having an internal locus of control and low filial expectations. The internalized locus of control is the most important factor of high quality relationships between urban parents and their children. Implications for education are provided.

"Socially Mobile Daughters and Sons of the Elderly: Mobility Effects Within the Family Revisited," Stephen Kulis. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 49(2):421-433, May 1987.

This study examines the effects of intergenerational occupational mobility on relationships between elderly parents and their adult children. Several explanations for observed mobility effects are distinguished and tested: that mobility introduces cultural disparities, status comparisons, or greater residential separation between mobile children and their parents. Data indicate that mobility effects depend on the direction of the mobility, the gender of the child, the perspective of the reporting generation. Data are limited to feelings and perceptions more than actual overt behavior.

INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMMING

"Bridging the Generation Gap: Perspectives on Aging for High School Students--A Vanguard Program," Joan Miksis. Illinois Teacher, 178-181, April 1988.

Intergenerational sharing can be valuable for both teens and the elderly, because they can have much in common. Life-span education is an area where family educators can be pioneers of the future. This article describes a high school curriculum on aging that focuses on: attitudes toward aging, factors affecting aging, demographics, well-being in later life, communication skills, family relationships, and community resources.

"Content Analysis of an Intergenerational Unit on Aging in a Sixth-Grade Classroom," David E. Corbin, Dona M. Kagan, and Josie Metal-Corbin. Educational Gerontology, 13(5):403-410, 1987.

This study evaluates a seven day program that uses discussion, dance and song to bring children older adults from the community and sixth-grade students together. Results suggest that as the program progresses, the students begin to perceive the older participants in active rather than passive terms. The nature of the program, thus, becomes more interactive.

"The Development of an Intergenerational Service-Learning Program at a Nursing Home," Sally Newman, Charles W. Lyons and Roland S.T. Onawola. The Gerontologist, 25(2):130-133, 1985.

A demonstration intergenerational service-learning model is developed to improve the well-being of elderly nursing home residents. The model involves the collaboration of four community agencies and the integration of college students' learning about aging by visiting elderly residents. The one semester social interaction between college students and elderly nursing home residents results in substantial improvements in the residents' psychosocial and physical conditions and in the students' perceptions of aging. There is potential for replication of this program in other communities.

"Elder Campers Helping Others--The ECHO Project: A Unique Intergenerational Model," Carol Sue Hayden. Activities, Adaptation and Aging, 11(1):11-19, 1988.

A growing awareness of problems inherent in today's age-segregated society has resulted in the development of many intergenerational programs which benefit both elders and children. This article describes the ECHO design, an innovative program that places senior volunteers in summer camps. The implementation process and program impact are discussed.

A Guide to Intergenerational Programs, Mary Brugger Murphy. Washington, D.C.: National Association of State Units on Aging, 1984.

This report describes some intergenerational programs and guides the reader interested in program development to experienced program developers, resources and materials.

"Helping At-Risk Youth Through Intergenerational Programming," Catherine Ventura-Merkel and Marc Freedman. Children Today, 17(1):10-13, 1988.

The authors describe programs designed to simultaneously meet the needs of young, old, families, and communities in a cost-effective manner by sharing limited resources. These programs are set up to increase cooperation, interaction, and exchange between any two generations. Most often the focus of such programming is on bringing together youths age 25 and younger and persons age 60 and older. However, many programs also involve the middle generation.

"Intergenerational Geriatric Remotivation: Elders' Perspectives," Sally Hutchinson and Rodman B. Webb. Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology, 3(3):273-297, 1988.

This article analyzes and describes elders' responses to a program in which middle-school aged children become "pals" to institutionalized male elders. The program meets twice a week for an entire year.

"Intergenerational Programs: Making Them Work," Carol Seefeldt. Childhood Education, 64(1):14-18, October 1987.

The author presents both negative and positive research findings about the impact of intergenerational programs. Recommendations for successful programming are provided.

"Intergenerational Programs: A Resource for Community Renewal," Kathlyn Thorp and Laurie Becker. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Positive Youth Development Initiative, Inc., July 1985.

This document provides information on: (a) The Basics: What, Who and Why, (b) Beginning: Issues and Answers, (c) Program Ideas, and (d) Resources. It was developed with support from the C.S. Mott Foundation and focuses on a wide variety of intergenerational programs.

"Perspectives on Intergenerational Initiatives--Past, Present and Future," Carol H. Tice. Children Today, September-October 1985, 6-11.

Programs that bring old and young together in organized ways can be found in all fifty states. A wide range of intergenerational initiatives are taking place in health and human service areas as well as in education. The author provides a listing of programs and suggestions on ways state agencies can systematically develop and support intergenerational service programs.

"Promoting Family Awareness and Intergenerational Exchange: An Informal Life-History Program," Katherine R. Allen. Educational Gerontology, 13(1):43-52, 1987.

The life-history method is well suited for promoting awareness about family history and encouraging intergenerational exchange. This technique enables individuals to discover and examine the people, values, experiences, and patterns that comprise their family heritage. Intergenerational exchange is promoted when younger and older people engage in self disclosure. Revealing personally meaningful information to an interested listener has many beneficial results. Older people review their lives with an empathetic audience, and younger people discover facts and fictions about their families of origin. Two exercises are provided for educators and families interested in genealogy and family history.

PUBLIC POLICY

"Public Policy For An Aging Society: The Case For Proactivism," Barbara A. Gunn. Journal of Home Economics, Fall 1987, 55-70.

The author states the need for home economists to take a proactive role in helping to frame public policy for a future society with an increasing proportion of elderly. The recently improved economic and social status for the elderly is good news for all ages. Now, without sacrificing gains made by the elderly, ways must be found to reduce the poverty rate among our children. Home Economists can do this by supporting public policy decisions that foster cooperation and understanding rather than conflict between generations.

Ties That Bind: The Interdependence of Generations, Eric R. Kingson, Barbara A. Hirshorn and John M. Cornman. Washington, D.C.: Seven Locks Press, 1989.

The challenge of an aging society, family caregiving, social security, research on aging, and public policy are addressed in this book.

CONSUMER

RELATIONSHIPS

"Caught in the Middle," Geraldine Gallagher, Mature Outlook, 3(4):35-41, Jul-Aug 1986.

Millions of women find that conflicting responsibilities to job, family, and aging parents are creating tremendous problems in their lives. The author discusses the super woman squeeze and strategies for the woman in the middle.

"Intergenerational Celebrations," Barbara M. Friedman, Educational Leadership, 45(8):52-55, May 1988.

Older people are feeling appreciated, fourth graders are broadening their horizons, and both groups are making new friends in a public school program designed to bridge the generations. The author describes a program in which students learn history through the memories of those who have lived it. As a result of the program, students better understand the process of aging.

"The Sandwich Generation," Jo Ann Miller. Working Mother, 10(1):46-52, January 1987.

This practical article illustrates how a working mother struggles to meet the demands of her aging mother as well as the needs of her young children. Special sections include "What to Tell Your Boss," "How to Handle Your Children," "Where To Find Help," and "Who's Caught in the Sandwich?"

The Unfinished Business of Living: Helping Aging Parents Help Themselves, Elwood N. Chapman. Los Altos, CA: Crisp Publications, Inc., 1988.

The author wrote this book to be circulated among family members. Goals suggested for readers include a greater awareness of recognizing and adapting to diminishing abilities of seniors, greater skill in decision making, commitment to a family support strategy, reduced pressure so adult children can enjoy their parents more, minimizing guilt among family members and a greater insight into the aging process.

CONTACT FOR ASSISTANCE

County Cooperative Extension Service (under county government in telephone directory)

County, area, or state agency on aging

Family science, human ecology, education, aging or psychology department at a college or university

Local library

Aging Network Service
Topaz House, Suite 812
4400 East West Highway
Bethesda, MD 20814
(301) 986-1608
(Ask for referrals to a local social worker for relatives who live at a distance from you.)

American Association of Retired Persons
1909 K. Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20049
(202) 872-4700

American Society on Aging
833 Market Street
Suite 516
San Francisco, CA 94130
(415) 543-2617

This PATHFINDER resulted from the author's research at the National Agricultural Library while on sabbatical leave from The University of Maryland during the summer and fall of 1989. Using database searches of AGRICOLA, Psycinfo, Social Scisearch, ERIC, Family Resources and Dissertation Abstracts International, relevant references were reviewed and annotated. It is authored by:

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